WILDLIFE '87

A Chronicle of Wildlife Conservation in Ontario

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Ministry of
Natural
Resources

WILDLIFE '87: A NATIONAL YEAR OF CONSERVATION, proclaimed by the federal government in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the first wildlife sanctuary established in North America. On June 8, 1887, Sir John A. Macdonald set aside an area of Last Mountain Lake in Saskatchewan as a sanctuary for nesting and migratory birds; habitat which would otherwise have been lost to the expansion of the Long Lake Railroad.

The theme for Wildlife '87, "Gaining Momentum", was chosen not only to signify the continual increase in awareness, support and number of accomplishments that have been made in the conservation of wildlife in the last 100 years, but also to indicate that the job is far from over. The year 1987 is a time to examine what has been done in the past, what is being done now, and what needs to be done in the future.

Ontario's efforts in wildlife conservation have been gaining momentum since the 1700s, as you will discover in the following pages. With the increased pressures that human expansion and activity are exerting on the environment, however, much has still to be done to ensure that we have a wildlife heritage to celebrate on the 200th anniversary of this historic event.

1762

General Thomas Gage, military governor of Montreal, proclaimed a closed season on "partridges" (as ruffed grouse were commonly called) in Canada from March 15 to July 15, during which time they were not to be hunted, taken or killed.

1791

Canada was divided into two provinces: Lower Canada (including what is now Quebec) and Upper Canada (including what is now Ontario).

1793

The first wolf and bear bounty was established in "An Act to encourage the destroying of Wolves and Bears in different parts of this Province." Wolf heads were worth twenty shillings and bear heads were worth ten shillings. Indians were exempt from receiving the bounty.

1796

The bear bounty was repealed as it was found to be "no longer necessary to encourage by a public bounty the destroying of bear in any part of this Province."

1807

The wolf bounty was rescinded because it was proving to be too costly for the benefits produced.

1809

The wolf bounty was reinstated since the inhabitants of the province continued "to suffer great injury and damage from Wolves." The bounty remained twenty shillings per wolf.

1821

Upper Canada's first game regulation was instituted in "An Act for the Preservation of Deer within this Province." Deer were not to be taken or killed between January 10 and July 1, but outside of this protected season, there was no limit on take. Violators could be fined forty shillings for a first offence. There were no government agents to enforce this law, however. Enforcement was dependent on informers who were rewarded with half of the fine money. The other half of the fine went to the Receiver General for the province. Indians were exempt from this legislation.

1822

The first two laws affecting the fur trade were passed, allowing for the duty-free importation of "beaver and fur of all kinds" from South America, the West Indies and the United States.

1830

Indians became eligible to receive the bounty for wolf pelts.

1836

The wolf bounty was increased to one pound ten shillings.

1839

The first general game law for Upper Canada was passed, establishing protected seasons for all classes of game. Deer or fawns were not to be hunted between February 1 and August 1, and "Wild Turkey, Prairie Hen or Grouse; or any Grouse, commonly called Pheasant or Partridge; or any Quail or Wood-Cock" were not to be taken between

March 1 and the first day of September. This law also contained the first ban on Sunday hunting and shooting.

Sir George Simpson of the Hudson Bay Company live-trapped the first beaver for transplant from the mainland to Akimiski Island in Hudson Bay.

1841

Upper Canada and Lower Canada were united to form the Province of Canada. Upper Canada became known as Canada West and Lower Canada became known as Canada East.

1843

Moose and elk were given the same protected season as deer in "An Act to prohibit the hunting and killing of Deer and other Game within this Province, at certain seasons of the year." The protected season for upland game birds (wild turkey, prairie hen, or grouse, "Grouse-Pheasant," partridge and quail) was changed to between February 1 and September 1, but woodcock were given a separate protected season, between February 1 and July 15. Venison and other game were not to be sold during the closed seasons.

1845

The shooting of wild swans, geese, ducks, teal, widgeon and snipe was prohibited from May 10 to August 15. It was also made illegal to trap or set traps, nets or snares for any grouse or quail, and to hunt or kill grouse or quail at night. For the first time, the legislation acknowledged unsportsmanlike conduct as the cause of the near extirpation of these species.

1849

"An Act to prohibit the use of Strychnine and other poisons for the destruction of certain kinds of wild animals" (fox and marten and "other wild animals of any kind") was enacted to protect domestic animals.

1850

Elk (wapiti) were near extinction in Ontario.

1851

Except between August 1 and January 1, it was made unlawful to allow "hounds or dogs of any breed or sort" to chase deer, moose or elk. The hunting season for wild ducks, teal, widgeon and other aquatic birds was lengthened to July 1 to April 1 of the following year, and snipe were given a year-round open season. The woodcock open season was shortened, however, to run between July 1 and January 1.

1856

"An Act to alter and amend the Game Laws of Upper Canada" was assented to. Deer, moose, elk, reindeer or "carriboo" were not to be hunted, taken or killed between February 1 and August 1; wild turkey, grouse, pheasant or partridge between March 1 and September 1; quail between March 1 and October 1; woodcock between March 1 and July 1; and, "wild Swan, Goose, or Duck of kinds known as the Mallard, Grey Duck, Black Duck, Wood Duck, or any of the kinds of Duck known as Teal" between April 15 and August 1. The ban on the trapping of upland game birds was extended to include wild turkey, grouse, partridge or pheasant, quail and woodcock.

1860

In an "Act for the better protection of Game in Upper Canada," Upper Canada brought out its first comprehensive furbearer regulations, as it was finally recognized as "desireable to prevent the destruction of certain animals at seasons of the year when their furs are of little or no value." Beaver, muskrat, mink, sable (marten), otter or fisher were not to be "trapped, hunted, taken or killed" between May 1 and November 1 in any year, and no traps or snares were to be laid during this period. This was the first step along the road to furbearer management.

The closed seasons for game were once again altered, most being extended by one month, and deer were added to the list of animals which were not to be trapped at any time. A section was also included which prohibited the

wanton destruction of game bird eggs. Fines for any of these offences ranged from five dollars to fifty dollars.

1864

Insectivorous and other birds "beneficial to agriculture" were given a protected season from March 1 to August 1, during which time it was not lawful to hunt, trap, capture, buy, sell or have in possession any bird except "eagles, falcons, hawks and other birds of the same kind, wild pigeons, rice birds (coots), kingfishers, crows and ravens." It was also made illegal to "take, injure, destroy or possess any nest, young, or egg" during this period, except those of eagles, falcons, hawks, or kingfishers.

1867

Confederation. Under the British North America Act, "all matters of a local or private nature," including wildlife, became a provincial responsibility. The federal government was given jurisdiction over fisheries, however.

1868

The first game legislation for the Province of Ontario was established through a re-enactment of the game laws of 1856. The open seasons for game were shortened, but no provision was made for more effective enforcement of this legislation. The open season for big game became September 1 to December 1; for wild turkey, grouse, pheasant, partridge and hare, September 1 to January 1; for quail, October 1 to January 1; and for woodcock, snipe, wild swan, goose and wild duck, September 1 to March 1. The trapping of any of these game animals was strictly prohibited, as was the taking or destroying of eggs of any of the game bird species. The legislation also stipulated that "batteries or sunken punts" were not to be used in the taking or killing of wild swans, geese or ducks. The open season for beaver, muskrat, mink, sable, otter and fisher was extended to run from November 15 to May 1. There was no limit on take during the open season, but the sale of game was allowed only within 14 days of the season closing date, after which time it was prohibited. Penalties of $2 to $25 were given for each head of game taken illegally.

In December of the same year, an amendment was made which altered the open seasons for hare (September 1 to March 1), woodcock and snipe (August 12 to March 1), waterfowl (August 15 to April 15), and furbearers (October 15 to May 1).

1870

Around this time, English sparrows were introduced into Ontario, ten pairs being released at Ottawa. They had been introduced into North America in 1850, when eight pairs from Britain were released in Brooklyn, New York.

1871

The open seasons for game were amended once again, with the big game season being extended (September 1 to December 19) and two different waterfowl seasons being established. For black duck, grey mallard, teal or wood duck, the open season became September 15 to April 15, and for other ducks, wild swans or geese, the season became August 15 to May 1. Woodcock and snipe were given a season from July 15 to March 1, but the season for quail was to be closed for three years. The

open season for furbearers was shortened to November 1 to March 1, but muskrat were singled out and given an open season between February 1 and May 1. The use of poisons for killing wild animals was prohibited in areas where dogs or cattle might have access to them. To improve enforcement of these laws, an informant's share of a fine was increased to 100 per cent.

1872

The first official recognition of the difference between furbearers and other wildlife species was made in "An Act to consolidate and amend the laws for the Protection of Game and Fur-bearing Animals in Ontario." "Racoons" were added to the rank of furbearer and the term sable was replaced by the term "Martin," (the sables' North American relative). The destruction of muskrat houses was also banned, the first recognition of the importance of habitat. The open season for furbearers was extended to November 1 to May 1. For big game, the open season was shortened to September 1 to December 1 and for waterfowl it was shortened to become August 15 to January 1, abolishing spring duck hunting. The quail season was open from October 1 to January 1, except in the counties of Essex, Kent, Lambton and Middlesex, where there was to be no open season for two years. Woodcock and snipe were given separate seasons, July 1 to January 1 and August 15 to May 1, respectively, and the season for hares and rabbits was extended to September 1 to March 1. Game could be exposed for sale up to a month after the season closing date, but the possession of any listed furbearer during the closed season (between May 1 and November 1) was outlawed. A citizen did have the right, however, to kill any furbearer "in defence or preservation of his property," even during the closed season. Fines for offences against this Act became differentiated. For each deer, elk, moose, reindeer or caribou taken illegally, the fine ranged from $10.00 to $50.00. For birds, eggs or furbearers taken illegally, or other breaches against this Act, the fines ranged from $5.00 to $25.00.

1873

The Insectivorous Bird Act was first amended by provincial legislation. Added to the list of birds that were not protected by this legislation were owls and jays and those listed under the Act protecting game and furbearing animals. All other wild native birds were protected year-round.

1878

Hunting big game for the purpose of exporting it out of the province became illegal. The open seasons for big game and woodcock were shortened one month, and dogs which were used in the hunting of deer were required to be restrained during the closed season.

Added to the list of birds not protected by The Insectivorous Bird Act were plover and blackbirds. Rails were protected, except between September 1 and January 1, during which period they could be shot.

1880

In an amendment to the Act protecting game animals and furbearers, provision was made for the Councils of any county, city, town, township or incorporated village to appoint a game inspector who would be responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Act. The open seasons for big game and snipe were shortened, and wild turkey were given the same season as quail (October 1 to January 1). The furbearer season remained the same, except that the season for mink was shortened one month, to close on April 1 instead of May 1.

1881

The Insectivorous Bird Act was amended to allow a person to shoot or destroy, on his own premises, robins and "cherry birds" during the fruit season.

1882

English sparrows were already being considered an "undesirable nuisance," due to the crop damage they caused and the adverse effect they were having on native song birds.

1884

The last recorded puma (panther or cougar) was killed in Ontario by T.W. White of Creemore. A specimen may have been taken in 1908, in which year Ward's Natural Science Establishment bought a puma speciman in Ontario, but there are no records of its origin.

1885

The Ontario Fisheries Act was assented to.

1886

Game seasons were altered once again. The seasons were now: for big game, October 15 to December 15; for grouse, pheasant, prairie fowl or partridge, September 1 to January 1; for woodcock, August 15 to January 1; for snipe, rail and golden plover, September 1 to January 1; for swans and geese, September 1 to May 1; for ducks of all kinds and all other waterfowl, September 1 to January 1; for hares, September 1 to March 15; and, for all furbearers (beaver, mink, muskrat, sable, marten, otter and fisher), November 1 to May 1. Raccoons were dropped from the list of furbearers protected by closed seasons. For quail, the season was to be closed during 1886 and 1887, and for wild turkey, the season was to be closed during 1886, 1887 and 1888.

1887

The first wildlife sanctuary in North America was established at Last Mountain Lake, Saskatchewan (the event commemorated by Wildlife '87).

1888

The open season for big game was shortened to run from October 15 to November 20. This season would apply only to deer, however, as the season for moose, elk, reindeer and caribou was closed until 1895. A $10.00 non-resident (residents of other than Ontario or Quebec, excepting those who were shareholders of a company and hunted on company land) deer hunting permit was established, which provided a revenue of $220.00 that year. Bag limits were also established for the first time. An individual could not take more than five deer per season; two people hunting together could not take more than eight deer; and three or more persons from a hunting party could not take more than twelve deer.

1889

The Insectivorous Bird Act was amended and the list of birds not protected under the Act was reduced to hawks, crows, blackbirds, English sparrows and those birds mentioned in the Act protecting game and furbearing animals. Also, the robin was listed as the only bird which was allowed to be shot during the fruit season.

1890

Ring-necked pheasants were introduced into Ontario (mainly in the southern agricultural areas).

A Royal Commission was appointed, under the chairmanship of Dr. G.A. MacCallum, to investigate dwindling game and fish resources. Questionnaires were circulated and personal interviews were held with sportsmen throughout the Province.

1892

The Ontario Game and Fish Commission Report was issued - a sweeping indictment of conditions with a long list of recommendations to prevent abuses, protect the resources and establish administration and enforcement on a more effective basis. Recommendations included shortening the deer season by 5 days; allowing the hunting of deer with hounds only from November 1 to November 15; abolishing the "party clause" and allowing sportsmen to kill only 2 deer each per season; establishing a fee and permit for foreign sportsmen to hunt deer; allowing the killing at sight of all dogs found running deer out of season; appointing an efficient force of Game Wardens; further protecting moose, elk and caribou; changing the open season on hares and rabbits and establishing a season for squirrels, to run from September 15 to December 15, so that one general shooting season could be observed; strictly protecting beaver, otter, fisher and wild turkey for 5 years; shortening the trapping season by one month; raising the bounty on wolves and setting a bounty on fox; setting a bag limit of 25 ducks per day per sportsman; and, prohibiting the sale of all kinds of game from the province.

"An Act to amend the Act for the Protection of Game and Fur-bearing Animals" was passed, based on many of the Commission's recommendations. The open season for deer was reduced to two weeks, November 1 to 15. This season was to apply to moose, reindeer, elk and caribou as well, but not until November 1, 1895, before which date they were not to be hunted, taken or killed. The legislation also reduced the bag limit to 2 deer, elk, moose, reindeer or caribou per season (except for deer which were the private property of a person and hunted on that person's land), protected fawns, prohibited the hunting or killing of deer by "crusting" (during crusted-over snow conditions when deer have difficulty moving around) or while they were "yarding" (gathered in a sheltered area during the winter), and allowed for any dog or hound found running deer during the closed season to be killed on sight. The season for beaver, otter and fisher was closed until November 1, 1897, and for wild turkey until October 15, 1897.

The open season for "grouse, pheasants, prairie fowl or partridge, woodcock, snipe, rail, plover, or any other water fowl or other game bird or animal (including black and grey squirrels and hares) not herein otherwise provided for," was set from September 15 to December 15; for

quail and wild turkey, October 15 to December 15; for swans and geese, September 15 to May 1; and for ducks of all kinds, September 1 to December 15. A bag limit of 300 ducks per season was also set. There was a prohibition on the purchase and sale of quail, snipe, wild turkey, woodcock and partridge for a period of 2 years, and on the taking of any game bird or animal for the purpose of export. The killing of wild fowl at night was declared unlawful, as was the hunting of ducks or other waterfowl from sailboats or steam yachts.

The Game and Fish Commission consolidated under a new five-member Board of Fish and Game Commissioners of the Province of Ontario to establish rules and regulations for the guidance of game and fish wardens and sub-wardens and to collect information and statistics. The Board, using its newly granted power to hire enforcement officers, appointed four wardens responsible for superintending about one quarter of southern Ontario each for $10.00 per month. A total of 392 deputy game wardens were also appointed. They received half of any fines they secured, but were not paid a standard salary.

Mandatory licensing was introduced for all hunters and trappers from outside Ontario and Quebec. This was a $25.00 fee, set to discourage many from applying, and thereby reducing hunting and trapping pressure, and to cover the expenses incurred in carrying out the provisions of the game laws. Indians and settlers in unorganized districts were to remain exempt from these game laws.

The wolf bounty was increased to $10.00.

1893

The open season for beaver, otter, marten and sable was replaced by a new one, to run from November 1 to April 1. Only marten and sable were immediately affected by this change, as the season for beaver and otter was to remain closed until 1897. The muskrat open season was also changed (November 1 to May 1) and a stipulation was added that they could not be shot during April. The big game season was changed to October 20 to November 15, but this was only to apply to deer until 1895, and there was to be no open season for prairie fowl or English or Mongolian pheasant until 1897.

The duck bag limit was increased to 400 per season and rabbit hunting was allowed at all times.

In an effort to improve enforcement of "The Ontario Game Protection Act," deputy wardens were required to take an oath of office, binding them to honestly discharge their duties.

The last known record of eastern elk in Ontario was made near North Bay.

1894

The seasons for snipe, woodcock and partridge were closed until 1897, and the season for furbearers was shortened to January 1 to April 1. Sable and marten were not included on the furbearer list, however.

1895

The Game and Fish Commission voted on a motion to ban the use of dogs in deer hunting. The motion was defeated 3 to 2. Hunting in Rondeau Provincial Park was banned at this time as well. The big game season returned

to November 1 to November 15, but this was not to apply to moose, elk, reindeer or caribou until 1900. An export licence was introduced which allowed a person to export two deer and the duck bag limit was removed.

1896

The first resident deer licence was established ($2.00) and 3,452 licences were issued. A shipping coupon was attached to the licence which was to be affixed to the deer during transportation. The killing of deer in the water was banned at this time and hunting in provincial parks was made illegal. Permissive legislation was passed also, allowing the Lieutenant-Governor in Council to designate certain counties or portions of counties in which it would be unlawful to hunt deer at any time. These areas would eventually become known as Crown Game Preserves.

1897

The target date for reopening the seasons for beaver, otter, wild turkey, and English or Mongolian pheasant was pushed ahead to 1900.

Fisheries overseers were provided for under the Game and Fish Commission, and members of the provincial police force were given the authority to act as game wardens.

Three Capercaillie, a very large type of grouse, were introduced from Scotland. They were retained at Rondeau Provincial Park for a year and later released in Algonquin Provincial Park. Several other releases were made in Ontario during the next decade.

1899

A Fisheries Department was formed as a result of a dispute between the federal and provincial governments over the jurisdiction of fisheries. This had prevented the Board of Game and Fish Commissioners from dealing with fisheries matters.

1900

The "Act to Amend and Consolidate the Ontario Game Protection Act" delivered a detailed set of regulations governing most aspects of the taking, shipping and exporting of game animals and game birds, furbearers and fish.

A new target date of 1905 was set for opening the beaver and otter season and the open season for muskrats was lengthened by one month. Express companies were henceforth required to report on game animals they transported, thus producing the first harvest monitoring.

The dates for the big game season remained the same as established in 1892, but the season for moose, reindeer and caribou was only to open in 1900 and every third year

thereafter. Cow moose or young moose, reindeer or caribou (under the age of one year) were not to be hunted and a bag limit of two deer, one bull moose or one bull reindeer or one bull caribou was imposed. Elk were not to be taken at all. The seasons for wild turkey, prairie fowl or English or Mongolian pheasants, beaver and otter were closed until 1905.

Provision was also made for the Lieutenant Governor to allow for the protection of any migratory bird in danger of extinction and for which hunting had been forbidden in any two or more of the United States south of Ontario.

1902

Two separate open seasons were set for moose, and reindeer or caribou - south of the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railroad, from the Town of Mattawa to the Town of Port Arthur, the season was to remain November 1 to November 15; north and west of this line the open season was set between October 16 to November 15.

The first fur farm in Ontario was established.

The last reliable sight record of the passenger pigeon in Ontario was made at Penetanguishene.

1905

A "special investigation of the conditions prevailing in different parts of the province with regard to game of all kinds" was begun. It was concluded that "....for effective game preservation, a law merely establishing closed seasons for the protection of game in the breeding season is entirely insufficient. The law must also contain such provisions as will effectively restrict the amount of game taken each year...." The necessity for effective enforcement backed by public support was also noted in this report.

1907

The Game and Fisheries Department, under the control of a Cabinet Minister, was formed to amalgamate the management of fisheries and game, and the Ontario Game and Fisheries Commission was to be disbanded. The structure of the department consisted of the Minister, the Superintendent of Game and Fisheries, a field staff of paid inspectors and wardens, and 215 unpaid overseers or deputy wardens who received one-half of the fine when a conviction was registered.

The last confirmed record of wild turkey in Ontario was made in Aurora. The species apparently persisted until 1909, but was considered to be gone from most of its range prior to 1890.

1908

New legislation prohibited trapping within Rondeau Park, and areas in which deer hunting was not allowed were dubbed Crown Game Preserves.

The Jack Miner goose sanctuary was started at Kingsville.

1909

The last meeting of the Ontario Game and Fisheries Commission, under the chairmanship of Kelly Evans, convened to investigate the condition of game fish, fisheries and game. The report was published in 1912. Many recommendations of importance to furbearer and game management were made, including that resident hunting and trapping licences be imposed for all species of game and furbearers; that bona fide settlers and Indians be required to carry a permit to hunt or trap; and that hunters should provide statistics on game killed. The report also stated that "....until the system for enforcing the observance of the game laws is vastly improved, the standard of its officers raised and the public itself taught to respect and obey the laws, the prime necessity must remain the endeavour to save the game at all costs while these matters are being contemplated and effected."

The first recorded release of Hungarian partridge (six birds) in Ontario was made at Brantford by the Brantford Fish and Game Protection Association. No permanent colonies were established, however, until 1933, when a release was made in the Nation River Valley near Kemptville and widespread colonization took place.

The first open season on "capercailzie" (capercaillie) was held, September 15 to December 15.

1910

Legislation was passed that limited hunters to one deer per year and that required settlers to buy resident hunting licences.

The first open season on ring-necked pheasants was held, October 15 to November 15.

1911

Settlers were once again given free hunting licences.

1912

The European hare (jackrabbit) was accidentally released from the Bow Park Farm in the Brantford area and established Ontario's European hare population.

The first open season on Hungarian partridge was held, October 15 to November 15.

1913

The non-resident's trapping licence was set at $20.

1914

The first starlings were sighted in Ontario near Niagara Falls.

Dealers in raw furs became licensed.

1916

An agreement known as the Migratory Bird Convention was made between Canada and the United States.

Beaver and otter seasons were finally reopened. To protect against overharvesting, a form of quota system was developed in which special coupons were sold to be attached to each pelt. Beaver pelts required one coupon each and otter pelts required 2 each. A trapper could buy up to 10 coupons per season. In essence, these coupons produced the first form of fur royalties. The sealing of pelts was also introduced to stop the illegal trafficking of furs.

A resident trapper's licence was instituted ($5.00).

1917

The Federal Government passed the Migratory Bird Convention Act, enabling the Canadian Government to meet the terms of the agreement made in 1916. This Act empowered the government to pass and enforce regulations to protect those species of migratory birds included in the Convention, ensuring uniformity of regulations pertaining to the use of birds which migrate between Canada and the United States.

Legislation was passed which permitted people to hunt wolves and foxes without a licence.

Ontario's first Crown Game Preserves were established in Grey County.

1918

A resident fur buyer's licence was instituted.

Resident deer licence fees were increased to $3.00.

1919

A fur dresser's and tanner's licence was instituted, and records were required to be kept.

1920

The Department of Game and Fisheries was enlarged to 60 full-time overseers under 7 district superintendents.

1921

Provision was made in the legislation for special deer camp licences to allow camps to take deer for camp use (1 deer for every 6 persons in the party could be killed to be eaten in camp).

The last confirmed sighting of capercaillie was made in Algonquin Park.

1922

The government started stocking pheasants for release to the wild.

Starlings were reported to be breeding for the first time in Ontario at Burlington.

1924

The beaver and otter harvests were cancelled throughout the whole of southern Ontario.

1925

The large Chapleau Crown Game Preserve was set up as a breeding reserve for beaver, since the beaver population was low.

The Department of Game and Fisheries engaged its first biologist, H.H. MacKay, for fisheries work.

1926

An Order-in-Council required fur farmers to buy permits before live-trapping their breeding stock, and the Department of Game and Fisheries was to set limits on the number of animals taken from the wild.

An experimental fur farm was set up at Kirkfield to study the subject scientifically. This project lasted until 1940, but much of the research had been discontinued by 1936.

1927

Non-residents were officially forbidden to trap or hunt any of Ontario's furbearers.

The government made its first release of Hungarian partridges.

The Ontario Federation of Anglers was formed.

1928

Legislators made it illegal to molest or destroy "the den or usual place of habitation of any fur-bearing animal." Only the dens of wolves were excepted. This new law was unprecedented in its scope, as prior to this only a few species' den sites had been singled out for protection.

1929

The season for caribou was closed south of the French and Mattawa Rivers.

Frank Conibear began work on a more humane and efficient trap.

1930

Game wardens were issued uniforms.

1931

The Federation of Ontario Naturalists was formed to promote an understanding of the needs and values of preserving our natural resources and exert influence to protect our natural environment.

A Special Committee on Game was established (reported in 1933).

The use of dogs for deer, moose and caribou hunting was banned north of the French and Mattawa Rivers.

1932

The use of dogs for deer, moose and caribou hunting was banned across Ontario.

Elk were re-introduced in Ontario. In a deal that included three provincial governments and the federal government, Ontario received Rocky Mountain elk from Buffalo National Park near Wainright, Alberta (which was abolished in 1947) in exchange for helping to restock Quebec beaver preserves and for shipments of small-mouth bass to Alberta. The first animals were shipped to Pembroke in 1932 and in 1933 additional releases were made at Burwash, Chapleau and Nipigon-Onaman Crown Game Preserves. Forty bison were also released at Burwash in 1933.

1933

The use of dogs in the taking or killing of mink, beaver and otter was banned.

1934

The first Pelee Island pheasant hunt was held with the first township fee.

1935

Dogs were again allowed in deer hunts but there were restrictions on number. The Partial Buck Law was also passed, which allowed for one female or male deer under the age of one year to be taken for each four members of a hunting party.

The first zoned traplines were established, with one licence issued for each zone. Surveyed townships were assigned as trapline areas.

1936

Eagles and ospreys became protected species under The Game and Fisheries Act.

1937

Twenty-seven townships of southern Ontario became "regulated townships," in an attempt to answer the problem of unreasonable concentrations of hunters on the opening day of the pheasant season and deteriorating farmer-hunter relations. In addition to the provincial hunting licence, these townships were given the authority to sell special township licences for the hunting of pheasants and rabbits to limit the number of hunters.

An amendment was made to the Partial Buck Law, which allowed every 2 members of a party to take one female deer or one male deer under the age of one year.

1938

Ducks Unlimited (Canada) was organized - part of an international, private, nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to the perpetuation and increase of North America's waterfowl resources through restoration, preservation and creation of prime breeding habitat in Canada, and wintering areas in the United States and Mexico.

Regulated townships were established by Order-in-Council under the name "Regulated Game Preserves." Hunting in these townships was regulated with the issue of special township licences.

1940

Six elk were released in the Peterborough Crown Game Preserve. There were 121 Crown Game Preserves in Ontario.

1941

The Association for the Protection of Furbearing Animals was formed. This was Ontario's first humane trapping organization.

The last confirmed sighting of the timber rattlesnake in Ontario was made at Niagara Glen.

The Kesagami Beaver and Fur Preserve was established.

1942

The bear bounty was re-instated by Order-in-Council.

1944

The Research Division of the Department of Game and Fisheries was formed and headed by Dr. C.H.D. Clarke.

1945

The first research was begun at Algonquin Park in a study area established by Order-in-Council the previous year. Population studies were carried out on birds, small mammals, deer, beaver, ruffed grouse and vegetation.

1946

The Department of Game and Fisheries was incorporated into the Department of Lands and Forests and was renamed the Division of Fish and Wildlife, with Dr. W.J.K. Harkness as Chief. This merger marked the beginning of what was to be the most productive period in game and furbearer management in Ontario. Up until 1946, management consisted mainly of opening and closing seasons, setting bag limits and enforcing regulations pertaining to these actions. The Division of Fish and Wildlife was developed with the objective of managing game on the basis of scientifically proven fact.

Training in wildlife ecology and management for non-technical field personnel was begun at the Forest Ranger School at Dorset. This was initially a 2 week session but eventually was expanded into a 33 week course. The course was divided into 3 sessions, with the first 2 sessions devoted to general courses in mathematics, drafting, survey, forest production, cruising, silviculture, composition and report writing, tree measurement, fish and wildlife, and public relations. The last session specialized in fish and wildlife and the duties and routine activities of conservation officers, as game wardens came to be known.

Deer check stations were located at strategic points during the hunt and used to collect biological information.

Guards began to shoot bison at the Burwash Industrial Farm (later a Crown Game Preserve), in an effort to exterminate the herd, because of the extensive damage they were causing to local farms.

1947

Legislation was written that would permit the establishment of a registered trapline system. Two types of licence were issued: a Trapline Licence for zoned areas on Crown lands and large private holdings, which was subject to limitations such as territory and number of furbearing animals which could be taken, and a Resident Trapper's Licence, which covered other conditions and provided for restriction to one area but not exclusive rights to that area. This would greatly assist the monitoring and control of harvests and help in preventing hostilities and trap thefts. A Supervisor of Trapline Management was appointed to implement the registration system.

The Act was also amended to include a condition that "beaver skins and pelts be sealed or marked by an officer before sale." No buyer was permitted to purchase or hold unsealed or unmarked beaver pelts.

National Wildlife Week was established by Order-in-Council in commemoration of Jack Miner, famed Canadian Conservationist (it falls during the week of his birthday, April 10).

The Canadian Wildlife Service was organized. The CWS now administers the Migratory Birds Convention Act, the Canada Wildlife Act, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and the National Registry of Pesticide Residues in Wildlife Tissues. It also conducts research on migratory birds, endangered species and other wildlife of national and international importance.

The Ontario Trapper's Association was formed. By the early 1950's a fur sale was organized despite strong opposition from fur buyers. By the early 1960's the central fur house auction was firmly established. The OTA's fur auction has grown into the largest sale of wild fur in the world.

The Fur Advisory Committee was formed. Its principal was to advise on any plans for the development, management, production and harvest of furbearer populations.

Hunters' organizations joined the Ontario Federation of Anglers to form the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. The purpose of this organization is to help in the conservation of Ontario's natural resources and promote ethical angling and hunting practices.

1948

The first Canadian National Sportsmen's Show was held.

1949

A Dominion Provincial Fur Agreement allowed for the appointment of fur management officers (who later became wildlife management officers). This was a giant step forward in furthering management objectives.

Domestic livestock in the Burwash area were found to contain a liver parasite which was thought to have spread from the elk to the domestic animals. The parasite did not seriously affect the elk but the cattle and sheep suffered noticeably. In an attempt to reduce the spread of this parasite, a program was undertaken to exterminate the Burwash elk herd. Over the next 3 years, 300 elk were shot by staff from the Department of Lands and Forests, University of Guelph and Burwash Industrial Farm. They did not succeed in eliminating the elk population, however, and elk still exist in the area.

A die-off of beaver in the northern West Patricia District, due to an outbreak of tularemia (a plaqueliké disease transmitted by bloodsucking arthropods, contact with infected vertebrates or through contaminated water), was first noticed. By 1951 the beaver population had begun to come back. This event led to an increased awareness of wildlife diseases, and a systematic study of diseases and their effects on furbearers and other wildlife.

The moose season was closed as the population was severely reduced.

1950

The Fur Advisory Committee gained official status with the signing of a federal-provincial agreement that committed Ontario to the management of northern fur resources.

Fisher and marten joined beaver on the short list of furbearers whose pelts required sealing or official marking to be sold.

Raccoon hunting at night with hounds became recognized with the institution of a raccoon hunting licence and a raccoon dog licence.

An elk (wapiti) hunting season was opened, at first by special permit and, in 1951, by including elk on the deer licence.

1951

The partial Buck Law was removed. No restrictions as to sex or age were to apply to deer hunting until 1980, but the limit of one deer per licence was maintained.

Research in wildlife pathology started with a general survey to determine the identity, prevalence and distribution of diseases and parasites of wild mammals and birds. A survey of beaver diseases was made in this year.

1952

The Conservation Council of Ontario was formed to coordinate the provincial conservation associations. There are 32 member organizations.

1953

Game and Fisheries Wardens were redefined in The Game and Fisheries Act (Ontario) as Conservation Officers.

Lynx, mink and otter joined beaver, fisher and marten on the list of furbearers whose pelts required sealing or official marking to be sold.

The age and sex restrictions on moose were removed, and deer, moose and caribou became the only animals protected in the Game and Fisheries Act from being taken in defence or preservation of property.

The Ontario chapter of the Association for the Protection of Furbearing Animals changed its name to the Canadian Association for Humane Trapping (CAHT) and obtained a Federal Charter.

1954

An outbreak of rabies occurred in Ontario, the first in which wild mammals (principally red foxes rather than dogs) were the disseminators of the infection. As a consequence, rabies became a wildlife problem. This outbreak is thought to have originated in the Northwest Territories, and by 1958 had moved through the province into southern Ontario.

Students graduated from Ontario's first university fish and wildlife ecology program at the Ontario Agricultural College.

1955

The first Ontario Trapper's Association convention was held in Huntsville.

1956

Twelve marten and one fisher, live-trapped in the Chapleau Game Preserve, were transferred to Nova Scotia.

1957

A Hunter Safety Training Program was instituted in Ontario under permissive legislation and safety training was begun on an organized basis by member clubs of the OFAH.

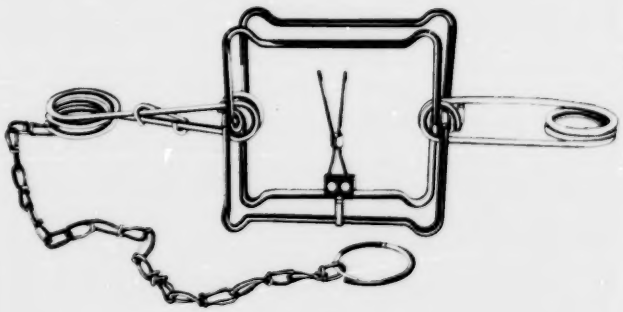
The Wolf Research Program was initiated by the Department of Lands and Forests to determine their influence on wildlife populations and the livestock industry and to assess the importance of wolves on the provincial economy. This research was continued up to 1965.

Nineteen marten from the Chapleau Game Preserve were released in the Upper peninsula of Michigan.

1958-1959

The first major outbreak of rabies occurred and the disease has remained widespread throughout southern Ontario since then. Research on rabies was begun in the early 1960's and has continued to the present. In fact, Ontario continues to be a world leader in rabies research.

1959



Frank Conibear's quick kill trap first became commercially available and was met with enthusiasm by trappers.

The OTA Fur Sales Services was established in North Bay as a marketing service for trappers where fur could be sold in a competitive market within the province.

An experimental wolf poisoning program was conducted in the Sioux Lookout and Port Arthur Districts to obtain information on the mechanics of controlling timber wolf populations, the sex and age composition of wolf packs, the effect of poison baits on other mammals and birds and the type of situation and type of poison bait sets that would minimize loss of other species.

1960

New hunters were required to successfully complete hunter safety training before obtaining a licence.

Massacre Island (Lake of the Woods) was declared a Wilderness Area to provide additional protection for the white pelican. (There are no pelicans currently nesting on this island, but the population in Ontario is increasing.)

1961

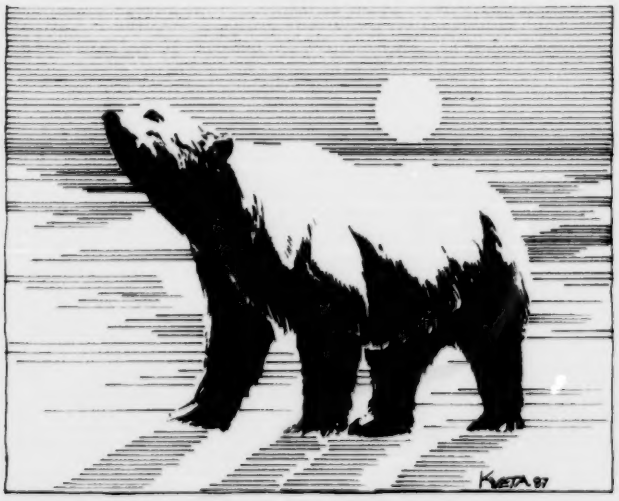
The bear bounty was discontinued and both black bear and polar bear became game animals for which a licence was required to hunt. An open season (Sept. 1 to June 30) was created for black bear, but there has never been an open season on polar bear.

Careless hunting became an offence for which the penalty of a fine of not more that $500 or a prison term of not more than 6 months or both was established.

A deer range improvement program was initiated in a few of the important wintering areas by the Timber and Fish and Wildlife Branches, recognizing that winter habitat conditions have a definite impact on deer survival.

The Canadian Wildlife Federation was founded to foster an understanding of natural processes so that people may live in harmony with the land and its resources.

The Ontario Waterfowl Research Foundation was formed. Data collected by this organization enables increasingly sound management of Ontario's waterfowl species.



1962

The Game and Fisheries Act became The Game and Fish Act. Included in the amendments was the addition of hawk, kingfishers and owls to the list of animals which were not allowed to be killed in defence or preservation of property, and an increase in the maximum penalty for careless hunting to $1000 or one year imprisonment or both.

The Provincial Hunting Area Program was initiated, establishing public hunting grounds. The Department of Lands and Forests acquired lands and established a system of intensive wildlife management on these areas to increase opportunities for outdoor recreation. There are now 2 main types of Wildlife Management Area: Provincial Wildlife Areas, which are open all year for activities such as hiking, wildlife viewing, archery, trapshooting, cross-country skiing, and hunting during the open seasons, and Wildlife Extension Landowner Agreement Areas, which are privately owned areas being managed cooperatively by the landowners and the Ministry of Natural Resources. In return, the landowners permit public access to the wildlife resources on their properties.

1963

Radio-telemetry was introduced and used to obtain information about the movement and activity of timber wolves, as part of the broad ecological study being conducted on this species. Preliminary testing was carried out in Algonquin Park in 1963, but the majority of the work was conducted in the summer and fall seasons of 1964 and 1965 in the northwest section of Parry Sound District.

The Canadian Association for Humane Trapping set up a trap exchange program to introduce the new Conibear trap, which was exchanged for leghold traps from the trappers. A Trap Inventor Assistance Program was started about the same time to encourage the development of more humane traps.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada was founded. It is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to acquiring and preserving ecologically significant areas.

1968

Judge de Navarre Kennedy provided the inspiration for the Humane Trap Development Committee (HTDC). This committee was formed of representatives from the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, the Canadian Association for Humane Trapping and the Association for the Protection of Furbearing Animals. It began a program of scientific study of the mechanical characteristics of various trap designs. Testing was begun in 1970.

A provincial mail survey system for moose and deer hunters was initiated to gather information on hunter activities.

A provincial standard, in the form of a written and practical examination, became a requirement for all new hunters.

1969

The stamping of fur with an official stamp available only at special sealing offices throughout the Province became mandatory. This provided the opportunity to obtain accurate records of the number of each species harvested because it was illegal to sell unstamped fur. By 1979 all species were required to be stamped except muskrat.

The Wildlife Extension Program was initiated, encouraging private landowners to manage wildlife on their lands and to provide access for hunting.

The Hawk Cliff Raptor Banding Station, near Port Stanley, was established, "continuing and expanding work begun by naturalists who were recording hawk movements as far back as the early 1900s."

1971

The Canadian Nature Federation was founded, (formerly the Canadian Audubon Society from 1961-1971), to promote recognition of the need to manage the environment based on sound ecological principles.

The Endangered Species Act (Ontario) was passed.

The administration of fur farms under The Fur Farms Act was transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

Ontario began trap research to improve traps and trapping methods.

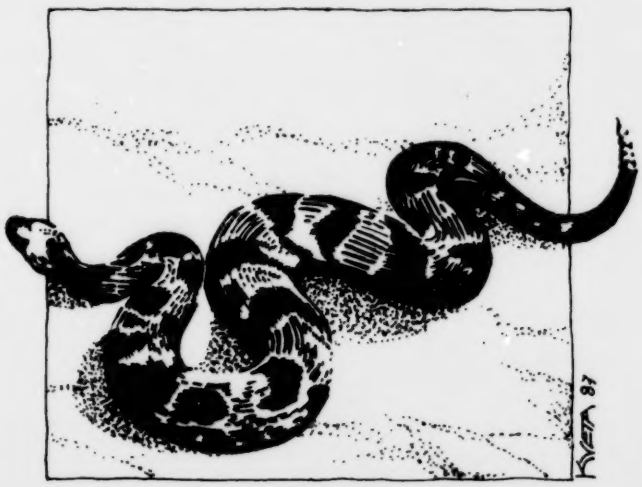
1972

The Department of Lands and Forests became the Ministry of Natural Resources. Wildlife and Fisheries Sections became separate branches and Fur Section became a section of the Commercial Fish and Fur Branch. The field was reorganized as well. The number of district offices was increased from 21 to 49 and the number of regional offices was increased from three to eight.

The wolf bounty was rescinded and The Wolf Damage to Livestock Compensation Act was passed.

1973

The first four endangered species were listed under the Endangered Species Act: the bald eagle, the peregrine falcon, the timber rattlesnake and the blue racer.



The Game and Fish Hearing Board was established in an amendment to The Game and Fish Act, to deal with complaints from rejected applicants for commercial licences.

The Federal-Provincial Committee for Humane Trapping (FPCHT) was formed and in 1974 embarked on an initial five-year program of trap testing and research. In 1975, the Humane Trap Development Committee wound down its program since the trap testing it had started was taken over by the FPCHT. The committee issued its final report in June 1981.

1974

A series of Wildlife Management Units began to be mapped, initially for the purposes of assisting with moose management in the northern region. Units were eventually mapped for the south as well, to assist with deer management. The system was regulated in 1982.

A Cooperative Waterfowl Habitat Program (1974-1982), between the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Ducks Unlimited Canada, was initiated to improve and develop wetlands for waterfowl. A second 5 year agreement was made in 1983.

The resource centre at Dorset was renamed The Leslie M. Frost Natural Resources Centre.

1975

CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, came into effect. Canada is a signatory to this convention and as such must act to ban commercial trade in an agreed list of currently endangered species. Ontario's role in CITES is to assure that endangered species are not brought into Canada through Ontario illegally.

The Ontario Deer Technical Committee was formed in response to the decline in deer numbers to identify and deal with problems of deer herds in a comprehensive manner.

A Moose Council was formed with the intent to reverse the decline in Ontario's moose population and to bring fresh co-ordination to moose management work.

1976

A minor reorganization occurred within the Ministry. Commercial Fisheries Section became a part of Fisheries Branch and Fur Section joined Wildlife Branch.

Ducks Unlimited opened its first office in Ontario at Barrie. A northern office was added in 1985 in Timmins.

1977

Nine more species were listed under the Endangered Species Act: the golden eagle, the Eskimo curlew, Kirtland's warbler, the piping plover, the white pelican, the eastern cougar, the Lake Erie water snake, the West Virginia white butterfly and the small white lady's slipper.

The Ministry of Natural Resources, from 1977 through to June 1985, completed or commissioned a total of 27 status reports on candidate endangered, threatened or rare species (11 on birds, 5 on reptiles, 2 on insects, one on a mammal, and 8 on plants).

The Peregrine Falcon Release Project was initiated. As of 1987, more than 100 peregrines have been re-stocked. The World Wildlife Fund, Canadian Wildlife Service and local naturalist groups have cooperated with MNR in many of the releases.

1978

Intensive rabies control research began through Ontario lottery funding.

The first controlled moose hunt was held in the Larose Forest in Eastern Region. Thirty hunters (with one partner each) were selected on a first come, first served basis to harvest 20 moose. The season was open only until the target harvest number was reached. A larger scale controlled moose hunt, which limited the number of hunters but did not specify a target harvest number, was held the next year in Hearst/Kapuskasing in response to declining moose numbers.

A comprehensive literature survey of the status of 25 species or subspecies of reptiles and amphibians was prepared by the Ministry of Natural Resources and provided to the Committee On the Status of Endangered Wildlife In Canada (COSEWIC) - the first project of its kind in Canada.

An amendment was made to The Game and Fish Act which enabled regulations to be made prescribing the number, the sex and the age of game that may be taken or possessed.

The only known population of small-whorled pogonias in Canada was discovered in Elgin County.

1979

Ontario's Nongame Program was formally established. This program gives formal recognition to the requirements of many species not traditionally monitored or managed through identification and assessment of status, population or habitat management, cooperation with other agencies and non-government organizations, research, enforcement and extension. The program also provides a framework for studies on wildlife species throughout the province. Prior to the inception of this program, some management of nongame species was undertaken, primarily endangered species however.

Milan Novak of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources developed a new trap, the Novak foot snare, used to live-trap coyotes, foxes and raccoons with relatively little injury to the animals.

The Controlled Deer Hunt Program began, with the first hunt in Simcoe County. This program, which allows a limited number of sportsmen to hunt in the southern agricultural zone, increases local hunting opportunities, decreases hunting pressure on the northern herds and reduces overabundant herds which were causing crop damage and a rising number of deer-vehicle collisions in the south. To participate in this hunt, sportsmen apply for a place in the hunt of their choice and, if successful, they receive controlled deer hunt validation tags. The controlled hunt program was expanded as a result of the success of this controlled hunt in Simcoe County. In 1987, there are 38 controlled deer hunts being managed in Ontario.

The Ministry of Natural Resources commissioned a study on pit and quarry rehabilitation in southern Ontario. Further research was recommended to determine the feasibility of rehabilitating pits and quarries for agriculture and fish and wildlife purposes. This research was commissioned in 1984.

The Breeding Bird Atlas of Ontario Project was initiated. Field work for the book was done by volunteers from 1981 to 1985, and the atlas was completed in 1987.

1980

The season was closed on elk, which remain in small numbers south of Sudbury.

The Selective Harvest Program for deer was implemented. This system limits the number of does and fawns (antlerless deer) that can be taken, to limit the removal of too many breeding females. All licensed hunters may take bucks, and, where a herd is close to or over the carrying capacity of its range, most or all hunters may take antlerless deer. Where a herd is below the carrying capacity, however, hunters may be restricted to bucks only. Hunters must apply for a special validation tag, acquired through a draw, in order to hunt antlerless deer. As a result of this system, 6,000 fewer antlerless deer were taken in 1980 than in 1979.

The Ministry of Natural Resources introduced a mandatory Trapper Education Program in three southern regions through the Ontario community college system.

A new moose management policy was implemented, designed to double the number of moose in the province by the year 2000. The policy consists of a number of schemes, based more on hunter management than season manipulation. These included harvest control, hunter education, population and habitat management, increased enforcement, and research.

The passage of Bill 59 in November, provided the first major revision to the province's wildlife management laws in 10 years. Amendments to the Game and Fish Act included: excluding caribou, deer, elk, moose and any animal protected under the Endangered Species Act from the legislation which allows any animal to be taken or destroyed if found damaging or destroying personal property, and ensuring that provisions for regulating the taking of certain species of reptiles and amphibians could be made when needed. A separate black bear licence for resident and non-resident hunters was introduced. Up to this point, bear could be shot as a bonus animal under a moose or deer licence.

Active work to create a system of wetland evaluation was started by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Canada, through the establishment of the Canada/Ontario Steering Committee on Wetland Evaluation. The most current edition of "An Evaluation System for Wetlands in Ontario South of the Precambrian Shield" was printed in 1985.

The World Conservation Strategy was introduced by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). This organization is composed of more than 450 governments and non-government agencies.

1981

The Fur Harvest, Fur Management and Conservation Course became mandatory for novice trappers throughout the province.

An Agreement was signed between the Ontario Trappers' Association and the Ministry of Natural Resources, through which the OTA agrees to print any "works" produced by MNR's Fur Section. In return, any money obtained as a result of these "works" are devoted to trapper education.

The Long point Bird Observatory initiated the Ontario Lakes Loon Survey, a co-operative outreach project relying on volunteers to collect data on the presence and breeding success of loons in lakes throughout the province. The data will be valuable in monitoring the status of loons over time and the possible impact of acid rain and other factors on loon populations.

MNR implemented a trapper education policy, designed to encourage the conservation of furbearing animals, educate and encourage trappers to use humane trapping techniques, and educate and encourage landowners to manage the furbearers and furbearer habitat on their properties.

The small whorled pogonia was added to Ontario's endangered species list.

The Private Lands Trapping Program was given government approval. As 10% of Ontario's land is private, this program was set up to encourage trappers to co-operate with each other and landowners on private land, to establish boundaries within a property within which a trapper was licensed to trap, and to stimulate trapper involvement in furbearer management on private lands. A Ministry of Natural Resources - Ontario Trappers' Association committee was formed to develop policies and procedures for the program.

1982

Guidelines for Wildlife Policy in Canada were endorsed by wildlife ministers in Canada and national non-government wildlife organizations. Ontario plays an important role in this process, which is an extension of the World Conservation Strategy.

The Trumpeter Swan Program was started in an attempt to reintroduce this species to Ontario. The last migrants crossed Ontario about 100 years ago.

The self-allocation process for tourist outfitters was introduced to allocate the tourist industry's share of the moose harvest.

1983

A Selective Harvest Program for moose was introduced, in keeping with the 1980 policy. A resident's licence to hunt moose is now valid for hunting calf moose in any Wildlife Management Unit that has an open season. A resident wishing to hunt a bull or cow moose must purchase a moose licence and then apply for the moose validation tag draw. Most non-residents are required to be a registered guest of a licensed tourist outfitter who has applied for and received, on the non-resident's behalf, a validation tag to hunt a moose. Party hunting for moose was banned at this time.

The Fur Institute of Canada (FIC) was formed and took over the work of the Federal-Provincial Committee for Humane Trapping. Its Board of Directors is made up of representatives from the fur industry, provincial and federal governments, and trappers' and humane organizations.

MNR adopted a policy which required any furbearer pelts acquired by the Ministry from nuisance animals, road kills, over-quota catches, or forfeitures to be turned over to the Ontario Trappers Association's Trapper Education Fund.

The Bald Eagle Release Project was initiated by the Ministry of Natural Resources in southwestern Ontario in co-operation with the Canadian Wildlife Service. The first bald eagle hacked in Elgin County since 1969 was banded at the Hawk Cliff Raptor Banding Station in co-operation with Aylmer District in 1983. MNR also assisted with a Bald Eagle Release Project initiated by the Hamilton Naturalist Club and the Grand River Conservation Authority in 1987.

A series of habitat guidelines for osprey, heronries, bats, forest nesting raptors, cavity nesting birds, birds of Ontario's wetlands (excluding waterfowl), and warblers of Ontario's northern coniferous forests, mixed forests and southern hardwood forests began to be developed by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

MNR's Wildlife Research Section undertook migration monitoring studies for several small bird species, and monitored populations of several raptors based on data from hawk migration counts.

The Deer/Bear Pilot Project commenced in Northwestern Region, requiring non-resident deer and black bear hunters to stay at recognized tourist establishments or use the services of approved local guides in order to encourage a wider distribution of hunters and to enhance the tourism industry.

Chatham District initiated a Landowner Contact Program to advise landowners of the presence of potential endangered species on private property.

1984

Wild turkey reintroductions were initiated, in co-operation with the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters and other conservationists. A total of 250 eastern wild turkeys have been received from the states of Missouri, Iowa, Michigan, New York and Vermont and released at five sites in southern Ontario. In return for these birds, Ontario has provided moose, river otter, and grey (Hungarian) partridge.

Eight species or subspecies of turtles native to Ontario became protected under a regulation of the Game and Fish Act.

Chatham District commissioned a study to identify the status and habitat requirements of the Karner blue butterfly and a habitat reconstruction project was initiated. Chatham District also commissioned a study to assess the habitat of the blue racer on Pelee Island.

1985

The Community Wildlife Involvement Program (CWIP) was created. CWIP is a long-range "hands-on" wildlife management program for the public, designed to address loss of wildlife habitat, public misconceptions and lack of awareness about the needs and management of Ontario's wildlife resource, and decreases in recreational opportunities involving wildlife in southern Ontario. Under CWIP, interested citizens, clubs or school groups develop their own small-scale wildlife projects, have them approved by MNR, and then go to work. The Ministry provides funds to buy the material and equipment for the projects and provides technical advice, while the citizens volunteer their time and labour to manage and complete the projects.

Project WILD, an educational program emphasizing wildlife ecology and conservation for elementary students, was implemented in Ontario by the Ministry of Natural Resources, in conjunction with the Canadian Wildlife Federation. Ministry staff and school board leaders deliver workshops to teachers throughout the province. Project WILD received full endorsement by the Ministry of Education in 1986.

Algonquin Park District initiated a long-term monitoring study of the spotted salamander in 12 ponds to determine the possible effects of acid rain.

Party hunting for moose calves was introduced to allow hunters to continue to participate as part of an organized hunting group, after they have successfully taken an animal.

1986

A co-operative agreement between the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ducks Unlimited Canada and Wildlife Habitat Canada was signed to provide up to $1-million annually to secure Ontario's valuable wetland habitat.

The Nongame Program undertook a co-operative project with the World Wildlife Fund to study rare lepidoptera in the Pinery and a number of other unique areas in southern Ontario, and commissioned a status report on the southern flying squirrel and a study of potential habitat of the Henslow's sparrow.

1987

Four more species were listed under the Endangered Species Act: the cucumber tree, the large whorled pogonia, the prickly pear cactus and the heart-leaved plantain.

Ontario's first hunt for wild turkeys since the early 1900's was held in eastern Ontario. This was a controlled hunt for bearded (male) turkeys only.

A Woodland Caribou Management Policy was developed to increase awareness of this resource, protect and enhance the population, and provide recreational opportunities from it. The policy consists of habitat, population and harvest management components, and provides for assessment, increased enforcement, research, education and recreational viewing opportunities.

Three Ontario areas were designated wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention: Point Pelee National Park on Lake Erie, Polar Bear Provincial Park on Hudson Bay (the largest wetland designated under the convention at more than 2 million hectares), and the southern James Bay area containing the Hannah Bay and Moose River Migratory Bird Sanctuaries.

Guidelines to help pit and quarry operators rehabilitate their lands for fish and wildlife purposes were published.

A memorandum of understanding was signed by the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Citizenship and Culture to protect the unique natural habitat in Ontario's Carolinian vegetative zone. The province will match funds pledged by the World Wildlife Fund, The Nature Conservancy of Canada and Wildlife Habitat Canada.

Compiled by Kelly Lucas
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